

# socialist standard

July 2013  
Vol. 109 No. 1307  
£1.50

Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement



Ignoble  
Lords  
page 9



BNP in  
blazers?  
page 13



Down and  
out in the WSL  
page 23



# socialist standard

JULY 2013  
contents

## FEATURES

<b>Resistanbul</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Deep Blue Sea</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>UKIP - BNP in blazers?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Is Europe to blame?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Stereotypes</b>	<b>17</b>

## REGULARS

<b>Pathfinders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Halo Halo!</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Material World</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Greasy Pole</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mixed Media</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proper Gander</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>50 Years Ago</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Action Replay</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Voice from the Back</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Free Lunch</b>	<b>24</b>

## The Socialist Party

52 Clapham High Street,  
London SW4 7UN

Tel: 0207 622 3811

Email: [spgb@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb@worldsocialism.org)

Website: [www.worldsocialism.org/spgb](http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb)

Blog: <http://socialismoryourmoneyback.blogspot.com/>

## SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS

should be sent to the address above.

**RATES:** One year subscription (normal rate) £15. One year subscription (low/unwaged) £10. Europe rate £20 (Air mail). Rest of world £25 (Air mail). Voluntary supporters subscription £20 or more. Cheques payable to 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain'.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 6 July** at the address above. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee.

## Contact Details

### UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

#### LONDON

**North London branch.** Meets 2nd Tuesday 7.30pm. The Coronet, 338-346 Holloway Road, London N7 6NJ

**South London branch.** Meets 1st Tues. 7.00pm. Head Office. 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Tel: 020 7622 3811

**West London branch.** Meets 1st & 3rd Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. Corres: 51 Gayford Road, London W12 9BY.

#### MIDLANDS

**West Midlands Regional branch.** Meets last Sunday of the month, the Briar Rose pub, 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE. Tel: Tony Gluck 01242 235615. Email: [tonygluck111@btinternet.com](mailto:tonygluck111@btinternet.com)

#### NORTHEAST

**Northeast branch.** Contact: Brian Barry, 86 Edmond Ct, Ryhope, Sunderland SR2 0DY. Tel: 0191 521 0690.

#### NORTHWEST

**Lancaster branch.** Meets fortnightly 8.30pm. P. Shannon, 10 Green Street, Lancaster LA1 1DZ. Tel: 01524 382380

Email: [spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org](mailto:spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org)  
**Manchester branch.** Paul Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, M21 7LB. Tel: 0161 860 7189

**Bolton.** Tel: H. McLaughlin. 01204 844589

**Cumbria.** Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4BG

**Carlisle.** Robert Whitfield. Email:

[robdotbob@gmail.com](mailto:robdotbob@gmail.com) Tel: 07906 373975

**Rochdale.** Tel: R. Chadwick. 01706 522365

**Southeast Manchester.** Enquiries: Blanche Preston, 68 Fountains Road, M32 9PH

#### YORKSHIRE

**Huddersfield:** Richard Rainferd, 28 Armitage Rd, Armitage Bridge, Huddersfield HD4 7PD. Tel: 01484 327468

**Todmorden:** Keith Scholey, 1 Leeview Ct, Windsor Rd, OL14 5LJ. Tel: 01706 814 149

#### SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST

**Kent and Sussex Regional branch.** Meets second Sunday every month at 2.00pm at The Muggleton Inn, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1HJ. Dave Chesham:

Email: [whichfinder@gmail.com](mailto:whichfinder@gmail.com)

Tel: 07973 142701.

**South West Regional branch.** Meets 2nd Saturday of each month in the Railway Tavern, Salisbury, 2.00pm (check before attending). Shane Roberts, 86 High Street, Bristol BS5 6DN. Tel: 0117 9511199

**Canterbury.** Rob Cox, 4 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB

**Luton.** Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP

**Redruth.** Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 1PB. Tel: 01209 219293

#### EAST ANGLIA

**East Anglian Regional branch.** Meets every two months on a Saturday afternoon (see meetings page for details).

Pat Deutz, 11 The Links, Billericay, CM12 0EX. [n.deutz@btinternet.com](mailto:n.deutz@btinternet.com)

David Porter, Eastholme, Bush Drive,

Eccles-on-Sea, NR12 0SF.

Tel: 01692 582533.

Richard Headicar, 42 Woodcote, Firs Rd, Hethersett, NR9 3JD. Tel: 01603 814343.

**Cambridge.** Andrew Westley, 10 Marksby Close, Duxford, Cambridge CB2 4RS.

Tel: 07890343044

#### IRELAND

**Cork:** Kevin Cronin, 5 Curragh Woods, Frankfield, Cork. Tel: 021 4896427. Email:

[mariekev@eircom.net](mailto:mariekev@eircom.net)

**Newtownabbey:** Nigel McCullough. Tel: 028 90852062.

#### SCOTLAND

**Edinburgh branch.** Meets 1st Thur. 7.00-9.00pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh.

J. Moir. Tel: 0131 440 0995.

[JIMMY@jmoir29.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:JIMMY@jmoir29.freereserve.co.uk) Branch website:

<http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/>  
**Glasgow branch.** Meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Peter Hendrie, 75 Lairhills Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0LH. Tel: 01355 903105. Email: [peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk).

**Dundee.** Ian Ratcliffe, 16 Birkhall Ave, Wormit, Newport-on-Tay, DD6 8PX. Tel: 01328 541643.

**Lothian Socialist Discussion @** Autonomous Centre Edinburgh, ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA. Meets 4th Wednesday of each month 7.30-9.00pm. Tel: F.Anderson 07724 082753.

#### WALES

**Swansea branch.** Meets 2nd Mon, 7.30pm, Unitarian Church, High Street. Corres: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB.

Tel: 01792 643624

**Cardiff and District.** Corres: Richard Botterill, 21 Pen-Y-Bryn Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 3LG. Tel: 02920-615826

Email: [richardbotterill@hotmail.com](mailto:richardbotterill@hotmail.com)

#### Llandudno

Contact: Gareth Whitley - Email: [gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk)

### INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

**Latin America.** J.M. Morel, Calle 7 edif 45 apto 102, Multis nuevo La loteria, La Vega, Rep. Dominicana.

#### AFRICA

**Kenya.** Patrick Ndege, PO Box 78105, Nairobi.

**Swaziland.** Mandla Ntshakala, PO Box 981, Manzini.

**Zambia.** Kephas Mulenga, PO Box 280168, Kitwe.

#### ASIA

**India.** World Socialist Group, Vill Gobardhanpur. PO Amral, Dist. Bankura, 722122

**Japan.** Michael. Email: [japan.wsm@gmail.com](mailto:japan.wsm@gmail.com)

#### EUROPE

**Denmark.** Graham Taylor, Kjaerslund 9, floor 2 (middle), DK-8260 Viby J

**Germany.** Norbert.

E-mail: [weltsozialismus@gmx.net](mailto:weltsozialismus@gmx.net)

**Norway.** Robert Stafford.

Email: [hallblithe@yahoo.com](mailto:hallblithe@yahoo.com)

**Italy.** Gian Maria Freddi, Via Felice Casorati n. 6A, 37131 Verona

**Spain.** Alberto Gordillo, Avenida del Parque 2/2/3 Puerta A, 13200 Manzanares.

### COMPANION PARTIES OVERSEAS

#### World Socialist Party of Australia.

P. O. Box 1266 North Richmond 3121, Victoria, Australia.

Email: [commonownership@yahoo.com.au](mailto:commonownership@yahoo.com.au)

**Socialist Party of Canada/Parti Socialiste du Canada.** Box 4280, Victoria B.C. V8X 3X8 Canada.

Email: [SPC@iname.com](mailto:SPC@iname.com)

**World Socialist Party (New Zealand)** P.O. Box 1929, Auckland, NI, New Zealand.

**World Socialist Party of the United States**

P.O. Box 440247, Boston, MA 02144 USA.

Email: [boston@wspus.org](mailto:boston@wspus.org)

---

# Introducing The Socialist Party

---

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

**If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.**



# socialist standard

JULY 2013

## Editorial

---

### Enough food for everyone

---

WE LIVE in a world which has the potential to adequately feed, house and provide clean water and decent medical care for every single man, woman and child on Earth. The resources exist to banish material want as a problem for members of the human race. Yet millions throughout the world are malnourished, live in squalor or are actually dying of starvation or starvation-related diseases. The big question that faces the human race is what can be done about it?

Last month various pressure groups concerned with the plight of populations in the less developed countries organised a rally in Hyde Park, addressed among others by Bill Gates, to urge the leaders of the G8 countries to take action to 'stop big companies dodging tax in poor countries.' They seemed to imagine that if these taxes were paid to governments in Africa, South America, and Asia then the crushing burden of poverty suffered by the mass of people in those regions would begin to lift. A fresh way would be open for development, they argue. Food subsidies and health programmes would attack the deaths from malnutrition and disease. Education and housing would raise the quality of life for millions.

These things would not happen. Even if the big companies paid more taxes to the governments of these countries this would leave the curse of world poverty intact. The beneficiaries would be amongst the ruling elites who own and control production and distribution in the debtor countries. They are the ones who through their governments would get the money but they are not poor. Amidst the poverty of the

masses they live in luxury. Holding power often with brutally oppressive methods they care little for their populations. Their aim is their own self-enrichment.

There is of course a case for the populations of the advanced regions giving aid and assistance to the people in areas where infrastructures, services, means of production and distribution are poorly developed. Most people will accept this but it cannot happen under world capitalism which keeps even our ability to help others in economic shackles – or reduces it to the pathetic levels of charity. The tragic illusion of those who organised the rally is their belief that the devastating problems of world capitalism can be tackled by asking governments to re-arrange finance.

The things that are desperately needed – food, clean water, housing, sanitation, transport, medical services and so on, can only be provided by useful labour, of which there is an abundance throughout the world. Finance is part of a system which operates as a barrier to useful labour producing what people need. Useful production must be freed from the constraints of profit and class interest. Only useful labour applied through world cooperation once the Earth's resources have become the common heritage of all can solve the problems of world poverty.

World socialism could stop the dying from hunger immediately, and provide the conditions for good health and material security for all people across the Earth within a short time. It would do this by producing goods and services directly for need.

## Symptoms of Anachronitis

A REVOLUTIONARY change is currently sending shockwaves through the US Navy, to wit, the announcement that they are dropping the requirement for all official communications to be issued in capital letters (*BBC News Technology*, 13 June). A message sent to all commands (in capitals, naturally) has advised that in future signals may use a mixture of upper and lower cases. This is part of a cost-cutting initiative to move much of the Navy's information traffic to common-or-garden email systems. A wag at a London-based think tank observes sardonically 'The US Navy has made up its mind that not everything is a crisis and some messages are just normal,' but then, clearly unable to resist outright sarcasm, 'This will introduce a degree of literary criticism into military communication... many senior officers think that the younger ones don't know how to use capitals anyway, which is to say they either use far too many or not at all.'

Email users know very well that ALL CAPS FEELS LIKE SHOUTING, so US sailors must be a browbeaten lot, but the real reason behind the traditional use of capitals was simply that the original 19<sup>th</sup> century teletype machines did not have lower case letters. It's what they call a legacy system. By a curious coincidence, the world is only now about to see its last telegram, as the India state telegraph service finally shuts down its operations this month.

Legacy is a funny thing. One of the innovations introduced by Steve Jobs at Apple was to make computer icons resemble real world objects in order for their functions to be more intuitive, a device known as skeuomorphism. Thus a delete function was represented by a wastepaper basket, a recording facility by a microphone and so on. Often the icons were somewhat whimsically old-fashioned, so that a word processing program could be represented by a quill pen, for example, or a show desktop function by, mysteriously, an ink blotter. This skeuomorphic principle is currently in the process of being jettisoned at Apple, where mandarins are keen on a post-Jobsworth design reboot partly because, they say, the younger generation is failing to recognise what the icons represent as their real world counterparts fall into disuse.

Not everyone is convinced that people under the age of forty have no idea what a reel-to-reel tape recorder looks like, or are unable to recognise an old-fashioned Bakelite telephone icon in the era of smartphones. Young people watch old movies, don't they? But what rings true in principle is not only the fact that things become obsolete and we fail to recognise them as such, but that when we do recognise things as obsolete we perversely love them all the more for it. The old and knackered are reborn as sentimental icons, antiques and shabby chic, and not just material goods. Our civilisation is marinated in the obsolete, rotten with it, in language, law, logic and tradition, a kind of social anachronitis.

Why else do graduates ponce around in absurd Batman capes with silly hats, holding 'scrolls'? Why else, in an age of digital photography, would the physicist Peter Higgs be

'honoured' recently by having his portrait painted? Why do judges, in an effort to be taken seriously, wear 18<sup>th</sup> century-style fancy dress? Our most atavistic impulses seem to lurk in the deepest parts of our brain, right down in the reptilian cortex, where our conscious rational minds have no dominion.

Can you see where this argument is going yet? Chief reptile David Cameron has lately struck a limp blow for frontal lobe thinking by announcing a £1m 'grand innovation prize' to solve the 'biggest problem of our time' (*BBC News Politics*, 14 June). And just what might that problem be, the pundits ask? That, declares the Prime Minister, is a matter 'to be identified by the public'. Well, trust a millionaire not to know.

The 'biggest problem of our time' and the 'grand innovation' to solve it? Let's see...

Ok, you know what's coming next, don't you? Of course you do. Capitalism itself, an economic system based on competitive selfishness in a world that can't afford it any more, an anachronistic legacy of scarcity and the age of steam, that's the 'biggest problem' by far. An economy that sets human against human and country against country to create a few gilded sultans amid a sea of squalor, that is the problemo numero uno that the public should identify. And the innovation? It follows naturally enough - the abolition of the private property basis of this economy, and with it trading, markets, money, banks, hierarchical nation states, and all the rest of it.

That's what we would say, isn't it?

But summon our arguments how we may, we're not going to win that prize money, no sirree. And why? Because it's an unfair contest and Cameron's Cast of Clowns hates socialists?

Nope, because we're wrong.

Capitalism isn't the biggest problem of our time, because there's an even bigger problem, and it's already been alluded to. We are addicted to the past. We stand before the past like an actor against a backdrop and think that it defines us and determines what we are. We think we need the past and that we can't be anything without it. We don't see the world for what it is because we are obsessed with what it was. People say our civilisation is backward but that's not right. It's pathologically backwardly compatible.

There is a saying that the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, but that's not always true. Sometimes there's an obstacle in front of you. What's required then is not a step, but a jump. The single greatest difficulty, and also the greatest virtue, of the socialist case is that it demands a leap to clear the entanglements of the legacy-strewn present. But to make the leap, unless it's some blind and mad leap of faith, requires looking ahead into the future, coolly and clearly, and gauging the distance and the necessary run-up.

That's what science aims to do, and that's just what society isn't doing. That's why reformists are on a treadmill of sameness, forever in motion but never moving. That's why we are buried up to our necks in useless legacy. Capitalism is not the biggest problem, because that could be overthrown tomorrow. How to make people look forward instead of back, that's the real challenge of our times.





# Iain M Banks and The Culture

Iain [M] Banks, who died in June this year, was a precocious writer of visionary socialist science fiction. He finished his first novel, *Use of Weapons*, by the time he was twenty years old in 1974, but it was not until 1987 with the publication of *Consider Phlebas* that the world was introduced to the technologically sophisticated, resource-rich but egalitarian, free access and galaxy-spanning society of the near future known simply as The Culture.

Far removed from the bucolic, craft-industry based utopia of William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890), The Culture shares some key features, including that fact that '...human labour [is] restricted to something indistinguishable from play, or a hobby' (*A Few Notes on The Culture*, Iain M Banks, <http://tinyurl.com/46p8tqe>). In fact, this is true for alien partners, sentient machines and starships, which

can arguably be seen as executive councils, helping with the administration of things, while at the same time, having rich and varied lives of their own. Education too is viewed as a life-long process, as opposed to the schooling familiar to Morris and us, and given that science has eliminated death and disease, one that can go on forever in an infinite universe.

Some technology today would seem like magic to Morris. Take the example of another science fiction writer, Ken Macleod, who in *Night Sessions* describes 'a future where mobile phone technology is linked up to glasses which display information to the wearer' ('Capital, science fiction and labour', *Socialist Standard*, August 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/mlt9jl7>). For Banks, this is just one of many ways in which humans can be augmented. Other fantastical developments mentioned by Banks, such as biological immortality and artificial intelligence, remain tantalisingly out of reach. But technology alone cannot bring about socialism.

For Banks the writer, socialism comes about by us reaching for the stars. The Culture is established because it is beyond the reach of Earth-bound 'power systems'. Perhaps this is why rather than seeing socialism as a real practical alternative to capitalism, he urged us shortly before he died to take another spin on the reformist misery-go-round by joining the People's Assembly Against Austerity (*The Guardian*, 5 February 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/q2auqs6>). The visionary Culture series spans nine novels and as a testament stands in stark contrast to his rather myopic political views.

**R Stafford**



To book, send a cheque payable to The Socialist Party of Great Britain to Flat 2, 24 Tedstone Road, Quinton, Birmingham, B32 2PD  
Enquiries: [spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk)

Full residential: £150  
Mid-rate concs: £120  
Low-rate concs: £90  
Non-residential (inc meals): £50

Our lives are shaped by our closest relationships with other people - from our closest loved ones to acquaintances we barely know. But there are widens social factors which influence who we know and why we get on with them. The family has changed over time, our relationships are defined by our job roles, and now technology plays a greater part than before. And how we relate to others is still dictated by status and damaged by prejudice. Our weekend of talks, discussion and workshops will examine capitalist society's influence on how we all fit together, and how socialism can make relationships more equal and fair.

## Fircroft College

1018 Bristol Road, Selly Oak,  
Birmingham, B29 6LH



Friday eve	Steve Clayton on 'Family in Class Society: from Engels to Anti-Oedipus'
Saturday am	Mike Foster on 'Alienation at Work'
Saturday pm	Jacqueline Shodeke on 'The SPGB object and principles - their relationship to the political and non-political working class and to earth itself'
Saturday pm	What's in a word? Exploring what we mean by 'Comrade' - a workshop. Facilitated by Richard Field
Saturday eve	Bill Martin on "If we had but world enough and time": Relations with the Dead'
Sunday am	Mike Foster on 'Facing up to Physiognomy - the pseudoscience that won't go away'

Book online at [www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/catalog/summer-school](http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/catalog/summer-school)





## Capitalism and its demons

THE NEW Pope is certainly keen. He'd hardly been in the job five minutes before his wave of attacks on greedy bankers etc came blasting forth. He seems to be determined to abolish the problems of capitalism - by himself if necessary. We were warned that he intended to hit the ground running during his first months in office, and he has done - like a panic stricken choirboy being chased by a randy priest. Unfortunately his efforts have had no effect on the system yet, but he hasn't given up.

He's attacked the 'tyranny' of 'unbridled capitalism', and the 'heartless' 'cult of money', and told politicians to be bold in tackling the root causes of the economic crisis. And now he's announced his long-term plan. 'There is a need for financial reform along ethical lines that would produce in its turn an economic reform to benefit everyone' he says. Exactly what this reform is, and how it will work he hasn't told us yet. Maybe a bit of praying is needed first.

What he needs, in fact, if he thinks capitalism can be made to 'benefit everyone' is a bloody miracle. But perhaps that's what he has in mind. He is the Pope after all.

There have been signs, though, that in some matters at least, his judgement is not always automatically accepted, even in the Vatican. There were gasps of disbelief and alarm amongst the faithful recently when he announced that the act of doing good wasn't just confined to believers. Even atheists, despite their views, he said, were able to do good. And, he seemed to imply, atheists could even go to heaven.

Much to everyone's relief though, this turned out not to be the case. Following the Pope's message, a Vatican spokesman hurriedly clarified the issue with an 'Explanatory note on the meaning of salvation'. Contrary to the Pope's view, it now appears, being 'good' alone is *not* enough to be saved. People who know about the Catholic Church, said the spokesman, cannot be saved if they 'refuse to enter her or remain in her'.

Confusion also surrounds an incident in St Peter's Square where, according to various priests and a Catholic television channel, the Pope carried out an exorcism on a pilgrim live on TV. After putting together a panel of exorcism experts they reported, 'Exorcists who have seen the footage have no doubt - this was a prayer for liberation from Evil'. But the Vatican, conscious of their already wacky image tried to downplay the incident. Their spokesman said, rather ambiguously, 'The Holy Father did not intend to carry out any exorcism'.

But if it was a kosher, Vatican approved exorcism, it wasn't a very good one. According to the *Christian Post* website (31 May) the subject of the exorcism claims, 'I still have the demons inside me, they have not gone away'. (This is after thirty exorcism attempts by ten different exorcists). In fact one of them, Father Gabriel Amorth, says the man is possessed by four separate demons.

Father Amorth is no stranger to the Halo, Halo column. (See *Socialist Standard*, January 2012). Back then he was claiming to have carried out 70,000 exorcisms. He now claims, according to the *Mail Online* (27 May) to have rid us of 160,000 demons.

Where do these little buggers all come from? Exorcising demons is obviously about as effective as trying to make capitalism work in everyone's interest. It's an *exorcise* in lunacy. **NW**



## Postcard from the Peaks

Dear Editors

We never said (*Socialist Standard*, July) that using ropes or oxygen is like walking. Using ropes is part of climbing, it keeps us alive, and we use them all the time. I'm also not sure that I ever said that I despised any restrictions. There are no restrictions on the mountain so saying that I despise them is a bit over the top if they don't even exist? Also the Nepalese Govt never intervened. No one was ever arrested, I never saw a single policeman. The ringleader sherpas were back working on the mountain almost straight away! **JON GRIFFITH (by email)**

**Reply:** Accounts differ. Jon Griffith was one of three European mountaineers who in late April were at some 21,000 feet up Mount Everest, working to establish a new route to the summit unassisted by ropes or oxygen, when they were attacked by a group of Sherpas who were laying some fixed ropes nearby. The incident was reported by, among others, Oliver Thring in the *Sunday Times* of 5 May. In that report Griffith was quoted as saying 'For people like us the normal route to climb Everest is just like walking.' He was also reported as expressing negative feelings about those he called 'commercial climbers' - presumably referring to people who pay a lot of money to be luxuriously

accommodated before being respectfully guided up the mountain. And then there were his thoughts on the restrictions which arise from such arrangements: 'Being told not to climb on a certain day just because other people are there is against the freedom of the hills.'

Jon Griffith also questions the statement in the article that the Nepalese government had intervened. But a report by Ed Douglas in the *Guardian* on 1 May stated that the Nepalese authorities had intervened, by trying to involve all parties to concede that mistakes had been made and that there would be no more violence. But the Europeans rejected the offer and returned home with Griffith saying that he no longer felt safe above base camp on the mountain. In addition the Nepalese police arrested three Sherpas.

In its entirety the piece was intended to set out one of many examples of how Mount Everest, once regarded on one side as holy ground and on the other as a supreme test of moral fortitude, has deteriorated into just another sideshow in capitalism's commodity culture. - *Editors*



## A 'factual point'

LORD YOUNG is an adviser to David Cameron on 'enterprise'. In a report presented to the Cabinet in May, he wrote:

'The rise in the number of businesses in recent years shows that a recession can be an excellent time to start a business. Competitors who fall by the wayside enable well-run firms to expand and increase market share. Factors of production such as premises and labour can be cheaper and higher quality, meaning the return on investment can be greater' (*Observer*, 11 May).

The TUC was outraged, but a Downing Street spokesman said that Lord Young was merely stating a 'factual point'. We have to agree. He was merely describing what happens in a slump.

Growth under capitalism is not in a steady upward line but in fits and starts. The overall trend is upwards but through cycles of boom and slump in which booms create the conditions for the succeeding slump and slumps for the next boom.

A slump is a fall in total production due to overproduction, in relation to its market, typically in a key sector of the economy which has a knock-on effect on other sectors. The only way production will start to grow again is if the prospects for making a profit increase and spread. This is a slow process and does involve, among other things, what Lord Young describes.

Like he says, inefficient firms go to the wall. Their customers pass to the more efficient firms that survive so that the sales – and profits – of these firms grow. The assets of the inefficient firms pass cheaply to their rivals too or even to some new firm as Lord Young points out. Cheaper premises and equipment mean that, even with a smaller amount of profit, a higher rate of return can be anticipated. The downward pressure on wages exerted by increased unemployment has the same effect.

Other factors, not mentioned by Lord Young, also help the move to recovery, such as the clearance of unsold stocks and the lower rate of interest due to the supply of money-capital exceeding the demand for it.

Eventually – but there's no telling how long it might take – all these factors together restore profit prospects and the recovery begins.

In Marxist terms, what happens in a slump is that capital is devalued; this raises the rate of profit since any profits that are made are compared to a smaller amount of capital, the rate of profit – what Lord Young calls the 'return on investment' – being the ratio of profits to the value of the capital invested.

In a boom the opposite occurs. The demand for money-capital, premises, equipment, materials and workers increases leading eventually to an increase in their price; this exerts a downward pressure on the rate of profit even though the amount of profit is increasing. Eventually the boom bursts and capital accumulation falls.

Quite apart from overproduction in a boom in one key sector of the economy precipitating a slump, Marx saw slumps as an inevitable part of the process of long-term capitalist growth. Slumps, by eliminating inefficient firms and by devaluing capital, restored the rate of profit which boom conditions had reduced, so allowing capital accumulation to resume.

It's a continually repeating cycle that has gone on ever since capitalism became the dominant form of production (the first recognised slump was that of 1825) and will continue until capitalism is abolished. That's another factual point.

## PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM

### PAMPHLETS

Price and Qty

An Inconvenient Question: Socialism and The Environment.....	£2.00 x _____
What's Wrong With Using Parliament?.....	£1.00 x _____
Ecology and Socialism.....	£1.00 x _____
From Capitalism to Socialism: how we live and how we could live.....	£1.00 x _____
Africa: A Marxian Analysis.....	£1.50 x _____
Socialism As a Practical Alternative.....	£1.00 x _____
Some Aspects of Marxian Economics.....	£2.00 x _____
How the Gods Were Made.....	£1.50 x _____
Marxism and Darwinism by Anton Pannekoek.....	£1.50 x _____
How we Live and How we Might Live by William Morris.....	£1.50 x _____
The Right to be Lazy and other articles by Paul Lafargue.....	£2.00 x _____
Marxism Revisited.....	£2.00 x _____
Socialist Principles Explained.....	£2.00 x _____

**All the above pamphlets (25% discount).....** £15.00 x \_\_\_\_\_

### BOOKS

A Socialist Life by Heather Ball.....	£3.75 x _____
Are We Prisoners Of Our Genes?.....	£4.75 x _____
Socialism Or Your Money Back (reduced from £9.95).....	£4.00 x _____
<b>All the above books and pamphlets (25% discount).....</b>	£20.00 x _____

### DVD

Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff.....	£5.75 x _____
Poles Apart? Capitalism or socialism as the planet heats up.....	£5.75 x _____

**TOTAL .....** £ \_\_\_\_\_

All prices include postage and packing. For six or more of any publication, reduce the price by one third.

Return this form along with your cheque or money order to:  
**The Socialist Party of Great Britain, FREEPOST, London, SW4 7BR, United Kingdom.**  
 (No postage necessary if mailed within the UK)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

City.....

Postcode.....

County.....

PHONE (optional).....

E-MAIL (optional).....



# Big Pharma – pushing harmful drugs

LAST JANUARY Material World wrote about the rebellious teenagers ‘diagnosed’ with the newly invented Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and the highly profitable industry that has grown up to ‘treat’ – that is, abuse – them. The American Psychiatric Association has included ODD in the latest edition of its authoritative handbook, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), together with Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, for people who get angry too often, and Hoarding Disorder, for people who don’t like to throw things away.

## The biomedical model

In early May the Division of Clinical Psychology of the British Psychological Society called for a halt in the process of defining all sorts of deviant or inconvenient behaviours as physical illnesses that can be treated using drugs. In the view of many psychologists and other critics of psychiatry, one important reason for the prevalence of this ‘biomedical model’ of mental distress is that psychiatrists and their associations are financially dependent on – in other words, bribed and corrupted by – the big pharmaceutical companies (see Jamie Doward in the *Guardian Weekly*, 24 May). Plus, of course, it is much easier for psychiatrists to scribble a prescription than try to get to the bottom of the troubles of some obnoxious stranger – and they still get paid very handsomely for their time.

The British doctor Ben Goldacre levels a similar accusation against the medical profession as a whole in his book *Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients* (Faber and Faber, 2012). He clearly documents the control that the drug companies exercise – sometimes openly, often secretly – over the testing of their drugs and over the flow of drug-related information. Various devices, some quite ingenious, are used to rig clinical trials. If, as sometimes happens, the rigging fails and results are still different from those desired, then they are simply suppressed. Companies have extensive rights over data that are, after all, recognised as their property.

## Easy prey

Even the most conscientious doctors are therefore in no position to form balanced judgments about the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various drugs on offer for a given medical condition. They are easy prey for the orchestrated and persistent sales efforts of Big Pharma and its hordes of hired drug pushers, more widely known as ‘drug reps’ – perhaps as many as one drug rep for every three doctors. ‘Drug rep’, by the way, is one of those wasteful occupations that will not be needed in socialism.

Suppressed data often includes information sent in by doctors about dangerous or even fatal side effects suffered by patients taking a drug. True, such information eventually leaks out and becomes public knowledge. At that point the company adopts the pose of a ‘responsible corporate citizen’ and dramatically withdraws the drug from the market, pretending that it has only just become aware of the danger and is taking prompt action.

In Tom Nesi’s *Poison Pills: The Untold Story of the Vioxx Drug Scandal* (St. Martin’s Press, 2008), a writer with

long experience in the pharmaceuticals industry tells the inside story of Vioxx, a painkiller used at the height of its success by tens of millions of people in a score of countries. Vioxx was launched by Merck with great fanfare in May 1999. Over time evidence accumulated to the effect that while Vioxx might do less harm to the stomach than competing painkillers – a major selling point – it did entail increased risks of heart and kidney disease and stroke. After years of doing everything possible to conceal these dangers, including vicious smear campaigns against whistleblowers, Merck finally acknowledged the evidence and took Vioxx off the market in September 2004.

## A business expense

A company that continues promoting and selling a drug after it is known to be dangerous may well end up being sued and paying out hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. However, this has no discernible deterrent effect because a really successful drug – a ‘blockbuster’ like Vioxx or Pfizer’s anticonvulsant Neurontin – makes profits reckoned not in the hundreds of millions but in the *billions* of dollars annually. Payment of damages can be calmly contemplated as one business expense among others.

So can the fines that companies routinely pay for breaking the law. The Danish professor Peter Gotzsche recently published an article in the *British Medical Journal* (December 14, 2012) entitled ‘Big Pharma often commits corporate crime, and this must be stopped’. Gotzsche easily collected information on numerous crimes by googling the names of each of the ten largest drug companies in combination with the word ‘fraud’. The most common crimes, he tells us, are ‘illegal marketing by recommending drugs for non-approved (off-label) uses, misrepresentation of research results, hiding data on harms, and Medicaid and Medicare fraud’. Crimes are ‘widespread and repetitive [and] probably committed deliberately – because crime pays’. Fines are large, but profits are larger.

## Evidence-based medicine

Dr. Goldacre calls for ‘evidence-based medicine’ – a system in which medical decisions are systematically based on all the knowledge currently in existence. Such a system would require free, rapid and universal access to widely pooled information. The development of computerised systems makes this goal increasingly feasible in *technical* terms. What blocks its achievement is capitalist *property relations*, which inevitably encompass information as well as material commodities.

Thus, only a socialist society can create the basic conditions under which evidence-based medicine can flourish. Scientists and physicians will be able to cooperate freely to develop drugs and treatments that are safe, comfortable and effective.

STEFAN







# Wayward in Westminster

make sure he has unavoidably urgent commitments as often as possible on the fateful day leaving poor Nick Clegg to take the punishment. Not that this exposure allows Clegg to take any glory – the loutish sneers, the contemptuous laughter, the snarling of meaningless ‘questions’. Even worse for him, the Deputy Prime Minister has never mastered the Cameron technique of responding to a difficult question with one of his own – very often about something completely irrelevant. This is the Honourable Members at play, enjoying their post-lunch diversion.

## Lobbyists

A recently sprouted encouragement of misbehaviour during PMQs has been Cameron’s avowed determination to reform Parliament and its ways so that voters whose MP has failed to come up to scratch – perhaps by asking too many daft questions or guffawing too boisterously at an equally daft reply – can have access to a machinery which will force the deficient Member back into the real world by standing for election again. Another scheme is to make it more difficult – for Noble Lords as well as Honourable Members – to accept cash for promoting the cause of some company or pressure group. This is known as Cash For Access – lobbying ministers and the like with rewards which can bring tens of thousands of pounds dripping into the pockets of those pursued by the lobbyists. All of which is in breach of what are called The Rules of Conduct, betraying the promise that whatever influence an MP or a peer might have will be used in the interests of the people they are supposed to represent. This did not, of course, impress the Tory MP Neil Hamilton with those brown envelopes during the Nineties stuffed with cash from Harrods boss Mohammed Fayed, which introduced us to the word ‘sleaze’. When Hamilton was found out he had to resign from the front bench and was then soundly defeated by Martin Bell in the 1997 general election (his constituency is now represented by George Osborne) reducing him to earning his keep by appearing on *The Weakest Link* or – in the case of his wife – in the TV grovel of *I’m A Celebrity*...



## Noble Lords

Meanwhile the scandal continues. Recently there has been the exposure of three peers – Lords Cunningham (ex-Labour minister – ‘Are you suggesting £10,000 a month? Make that £12,000 a month. I think we could do a deal on that’), Mackenzie (ex-police Chief Superintendent) and Laird (the Lords is ‘a great place to do business’). And in the Lower House Patrick Mercer, Tory MP for Newark, was so cruelly shown up by a *Panorama* sting that he felt compelled to resign the Tory Whip to ‘save my party from embarrassment’ (not to mention his own discomfort) and to announce

that he will not stand at the next election. His problem springs from being shown on the nation’s TV accepting a down payment of £4,000 towards a total of £24,000 to promote a campaign for Fiji to be readmitted into the Commonwealth. The proposals of the bogus lobbyist included forming an All Party Parliamentary Group to press this cause, through questions in the Commons and an Early Day Motion, which was virtually written for Mercer, stating that ‘there is no justification’ for the islands’ continued suspension. Fiji was first suspended in 2006, after being taken over by a military dictatorship. There is no evidence to support the terms of that EDM; the situation is pretty well unchanged, with all that implies in terms of democracy and human rights. Recently the International Federation of Journalists advised anyone thinking of going there as a holiday that it is ‘no paradise right now’.

## Cameron

This is not the first time that Mercer’s ingrown tendency for abrasiveness has landed him on the wrong pages of the media. But in the unforgiving game of Westminster politics, could there have been any darker motive behind his exposure? The son of a Bishop of Exeter, he went to public school and Oxford before Sandhurst and the Army where he rose to the rank of Colonel with awards for ‘distinguished gallantry’. But he did not live up to a background so appealing to any Tory activist and he has not turned out to be one of Cameron’s favourite underlings. In 2007 he was sacked from the post of Shadow Minister for Home Security after suggesting that there was nothing exceptional in some soldiers being called ‘black bastard’ and expanding on this by recollecting that among some ethnic minority soldiers he had come across a lot were ‘idle and useless’.

In 2001 he supported Ian Duncan Smith in the Tory leadership contest and in 2005 he was for David Davis against Cameron. But it was unnecessary for him to develop the theme by describing Cameron as ‘a despicable creature...an arse’ and elaborating by telling us that he had ‘...never, ever come across anyone less suited to the job in my life. I would take a beggar off the streets and put him in that position rather than have Cameron. I loathe him.’ These remarks were published in the *People*; Mercer said they had been overheard and recorded in secret. As if that would have made any difference to Cameron loyalists nursing a desire for revenge on this wayward maverick.

But however incendiary his opinions and manner of giving vent to them Mercer had kept favour with his local Tories. When he first stood in Newark in 2001 his majority was 4073; in 2010, despite all his problems and clashes with the party, it was 16,152. He now sits as an Independent. When we consider the material which is dealt with by Parliament – the endless obsession with violence, poverty, class privilege, dishonesty – it must be concluded that there is nothing to justify the legislators taking any pride in their work or claiming to be more trustworthy and morally superior than Patrick Mercer and his noble swindlers.

**IVAN**

**Exposed: Lords Cunningham, Mackenzie and Laird**



# Resistanbul

## Confronting the arrogance of power

Understanding a society and culture that you have not grown up with is a tough call and Turkey, because of its geographical location, is surely one of the toughest of all. Trying to draw conclusions based upon European/Western perceptions and values will not benefit you one jot. Turkey is complex and contradictory and the unrest sweeping the country and centred on Taksim in Istanbul exposes the tensions of the modern Republic.

The significance of this uprising cannot be overstated. Since its foundation in 1923 Turkey has been an autocracy with an occasional flirtation with a bit of freedom. During the 1960s and 70s there was a rise in 'revolutionary socialism'. This period ended on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1977 when hidden (and still unidentified) snipers murdered 34 leftist demonstrators in Taksim Square. Clashes between fascist and leftist groupings escalated to the verge of civil war and led to the coup of September 1980. Thousands of activists, citizens and public figures were murdered by rival factions that were being manipulated by hidden vested interests and the military that were later identified as the so-called 'Deep State'.

existing political parties. Shell political parties populated by hand-picked lackeys were formed and the constitution was re-written. To counter any resurgence of the leftists a mix of racist nationalism and Islamic conservatism was encouraged to replace the secular nationalism of the Kemalists.

Over the subsequent years harsh crack-downs on dissenters from the government line have been the trade mark of the establishment. The media as well as individuals self-censored, either to gain or retain influence or to keep their jobs. Those who bucked the party line found themselves without work or their businesses harassed. In more recent years businessmen, politicians as well as individuals would attend the mosque, cover their wives and even make pilgrimages to Mecca to demonstrate suitability for promotion or consideration for a government contract. Shackled by a corrupt and vindictive political elite, ham-strung by tolerance-free policing and the ever-present military, Turks remained cowed – until now.

The spark that has unleashed the fire-storm of rebellion was not, as many think, about the destruction of trees and

some 30 peaceful protesters against the loss of one of the city's last green, public places. Gezi Park was to be sacrificed to build yet another shopping mall to benefit government cronies. The protesters returned, their numbers doubled, and were met with heightened police violence. By day three tens of thousands of enraged citizens were fighting with police for control of Taksim Square – *their* square! A place of huge significance to Turks, Taksim is the very essence of what belongs to the people.

This was no longer about trees or parks, it was and is about years of repression, of police violence, about successive governments that did not listen to the people, it is about corruption and cronyism, the Kurdish issues, religious homogenisation, freedom of expression, of sexuality, rampant neo-liberal economics, the government's support for and arming of foreign jihadis fighting against the Syrian government, freedom, democracy *and*, increasingly against the autocratic, micro-managing prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

In the street fighting that followed the world has witnessed, through iconic photographs and videos, the scale of the

state's violence and the will of the people to resist. The world has also witnessed the dramatic moments when the police withdrew.

For the first time in this the most heavily policed city in Europe they and their huge, armoured TOMAs (Public Incident

**“This is not about trees or parks, it is about repression, police violence, corruption, cronyism, democracy...”**

Thousands more faced imprisonment and torture. The coup broke up the trades union movement and banned all

Gezi Park at Taksim. It was all about the brutal, unprovoked violence of Istanbul's notorious 'Robo-Cops' in clearing away



Control Vehicle), had failed to break the people and the people celebrated. The sight of these monsters being chased out by a huge tracked digging machine driven by protesters was surreal.

Taksim sits on a hill and in order to protect the square and what it represents human chains thousands strong raised two metre-high barricades on every street leading to it – the only way through now is on foot or by bulldozer! Taksim has become what the people insist it will remain – their place. A place for families, for concerts and ballet, impromptu parties and discussion groups, for diversity and tolerance and unity:

## **“Any prime minister who can unite the street-fighting supporters of Istanbul’s three famous soccer clubs has a serious problem on his hands”**

*‘It is also about the possibility of bridging the many fault lines of Turkey’s complex society. In the park and the square, Kurdish activists, Kemalists, Turkish nationalists, Socialists, and “Anti-capitalist Muslims” have been able to fight and celebrate together, despite occasional confrontations, which were resolved by immediate intervention of bystanders.’ (Contours of the New Republic and Signals From the Past – Kerem Öktem)*

As Turkish media ignores or plays down what is happening, such coverage as does exist is focussed on Taksim. The brutal crackdown continues in cities and towns across the country as more and more citizens take courage and inspiration from Taksim and demonstrate. With mostly only social media available to get the story out, impressions can be blurred, misleading and sometimes fraudulent. That said, enough of the truth is emerging to show very clearly that Turks can, if they choose, build a different and more inclusive society based firmly on respect for the individual, freedoms of expression, conscience and speech and a determination to stand up against over-bearing government. Statements by the prime minister where he threatened to demolish the Atatürk Cultural Centre on Taksim and build a mosque, or when he accused the people on the streets of being terrorists, alcoholics, perverts, looters and worse, have only inflamed matters, brought

out more protesters and hardened opposition.

So, will the protesters succeed? That is a question that only they and time will answer. That said, any prime minister who can so divide a nation and unite the street-fighting supporters of Istanbul’s three famous soccer clubs has a serious problem on his hands.

Why now? There is so much else that is contributing to numbers on the streets all over Turkey – each would make an article in its own right:

Syria is a huge concern for most Turks who regard Syrians as their brothers and sisters and this government’s support for

jihadi insurgents as unforgivable.

Alevi are a mystical sect and an offshoot of Shia Islam. They have long been persecuted including in Turkey where there have been attempts to assimilate them into mainstream Sunni Islam and to impose the building of mosques in villages instead of the traditional cemevi (meeting house). Describing Turkey as 98percent Muslim may be correct but conceals the fact that Alevi form around 20percent of that.

Generals: there is intense anger, particularly amongst the secular middle classes at what they see as a vendetta against the military. Investigation of coup plotting seems to have degenerated into nothing more than mass show trials with little regard for evidence or due process.

Police in Turkey are a national force and officers are posted around the country, they therefore have no local connections or affinity with the communities they serve. They have a -reputation for unrestrained methods of policing which has been well documented. There is also ample evidence that their ranks have been infiltrated by adherents of the US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen. It is widely believed that other followers include members of the governing party although indications are that as the prime minister has tightened his grip on political power his desire to be ‘guided’ by Gülen has declined.

Gül vs Erdoğan: splits between prime minister and president have been evident for some time. The fact that Gül and the deputy prime minister acted immediately to try and defuse the tensions in Taksim as soon as Erdoğan left the country on a working trip is evidence of differences of style and approach.

Kurds: this is a hugely complicated and divisive issue. Erdoğan and the government have been edging towards a settlement with the PKK and its leader Abdullah Öcalan that has resulted in the

withdrawal of PKK fighters from Turkey into the Kurdistan Autonomous Region of Iraq. Nationalists are deeply opposed to any settlement which they see as the thin edge of a wedge that will have off parts of Turkey into a Kurdish state. It is interesting that the largest population centre of Kurds in Turkey is Istanbul, where they settled after being driven west by 30 years of conflict. In polling carried out recently the majority of Kurds do not want an independent state – they seek recognition of their ethnicity, culture and language *within* Turkey. As this is being written the PKK has declared its support for the uprising.

*Gerrymandering:* blatant manipulation of the electoral process, buying of votes, and control of the media.

*Executive Presidency:* there is much opposition throughout the country, including his own party, to Erdoğan’s push for an executive presidency. If he succeeds in changing the constitution and winning a subsequent presidential election it would extend his control over the country by a possible further 10 years. Under the present constitution members of parliament are limited to three terms and presidents to two.

*Anti-US sentiment* of which there is a great deal is growing. When US forces were planning to use Turkey, with government support, to invade Iraq such was public anger that the government was forced to reverse course and send the US troops out of the country. As they left they needed police protection from stone-throwing citizens who bombarded their convoys.

So, who are on the streets and occupying the parks? Just about every grouping you can think of including some supporters of the governing party – from ‘Revolutionary Muslims’ and ‘Anti-Capitalist Muslims’ to those opposed to the Syrian intervention, Kurdish and Alevi activists to LGBT and civil rights campaigners, the middle classes and secularists to socialists and Kemalists and suited business types, students, academics and intellectuals to artists, performers and pop stars –

you name it. Any one of those protesters could give any number of examples of what they don’t want. A very small number of groupings have articulated some very well-reasoned arguments for change and political development but they are not speaking for the movement as a whole which remains what it is – a representation of Turkey’s fractured opposition to Erdoğan. Erdoğan’s stated understanding of democracy is simply ‘put your vote in the box’ but Turks in ever-growing numbers see a huge deficit of democracy in their everyday lives.

**ALAN FENN, Turkey**



# The Deep Blue Sea

*If you look at a map of the world from a few generations ago, you will see vast swathes of pink marking the territories of the British Empire, on which the sun supposedly never set. Land-based empires are generally less prevalent now, but one hangover of those old imperial days is possession of tiny islands in the midst of vast areas of ocean.*



These areas are known as exclusive economic zones (EEZs); they were described in a useful article by Peter Nolan in a recent edition of *New Left Review* (no 80, March–April). An EEZ extends two hundred nautical miles from the coastline, and provides special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources. This includes energy production from water and wind power, as well as fish stocks and mineral resources.

Often an EEZ will be the property of the colonial power that occupied an island in past centuries. For instance, the UK itself has an EEZ of just under three hundred thousand square miles (this includes that arising from a 20-meter-high rock in the North Atlantic, Rockall, the ownership of which is disputed). But its total EEZ is well over two and half million square miles, including 212,000 square miles by dint of the Falklands and 560,000 square miles from South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. These are all claimed by Argentina, of course, and access to oceanic resources was a consideration in the Falklands War.

Bermuda, a British Overseas Territory, has an EEZ of 174,000 square miles, while in the case of Pitcairn Island the zone is 323,000 square miles. Pitcairn, famous as the destination of the mutineers from the *Bounty*, became a British colony in 1838, and today has a population of a few dozen. The surrounding seas abound in fish but, more importantly, contain mineral reserves such as iron, copper and gold.

Great Britain, however, has by no means the largest EEZ, coming only fifth in the league table. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the United States has the biggest, over four and a half million square miles. This includes the sizeable zones around Alaska and Hawaii, but also three quarters of a million square miles around uninhabited Pacific islands. France is not far behind, though, given all its overseas departments and territories. French Polynesia alone, acquired in 1842, has an EEZ of 1.8 million square miles. Australia is third, with many former parts of the British Empire having been transferred to Australian control. Just three South Pacific Islands contribute over half a million square miles to its EEZ,

though the country's mainland is the biggest source. Fourth is Russia, where colonial expansion into Siberia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to its enormously-long coastline and consequently large EEZ.

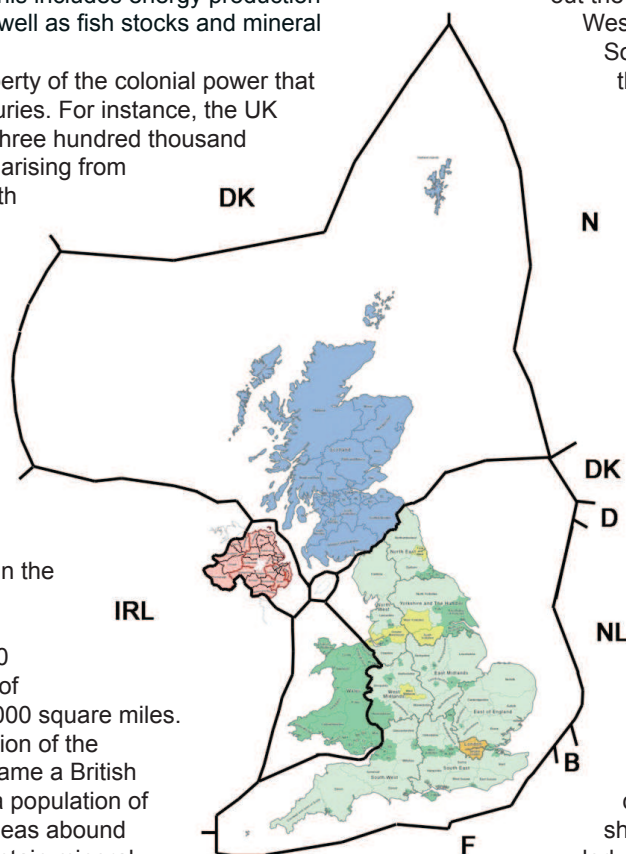
Part of the impetus behind Nolan's paper is to point out the hypocrisy that marks concerns in the Western media over China's claims in the South and East China Seas. These include the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, which are currently disputed with Japan, and the Spratley Islands, variously claimed also by Vietnam and Brunei, among others. China's undisputed EEZ is 350,000 square miles, less than that of Denmark or the Seychelles. Yet the Western media have kicked up a fuss over supposed Chinese ambitions while saying little about how the other powers acquired their far larger zones. Potential Chinese EEZs are certainly worrying some: as a recent US Congressional report stated, recognising some of these 'could permit China to expand the EEZ zone within which China claims a right to regulate foreign military activities' (ie. whether US ships and aircraft can operate there).

A country's territorial waters used to be limited to three nautical miles (the supposed reach of a cannon fired from land). In 1945 the US claimed control over the whole of its continental shelf, and similar claims by other states led eventually to various treaties and then to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which was agreed in 1982 and came into force in 1994. This introduced

EEZs, to limit clashes over fishing rights (such as the Cod War between Britain and Iceland in the 1970s) and resources such as oil.

Empires such as the British and French ones were conquered in the interests of land-based raw materials and cheap labour power, not of oceanic property zones. Nevertheless, they are proving very fruitful as sources of fish, minerals and energy. Capitalism carves up the world for its own ends, and protects and defends any serendipitous discoveries that are made.

**PAUL BENNETT**



**Top right: Rockall. Above: the UK's EEZ**



# UKIP: Are they really the BNP in blazers ?



In Trafalgar Square at this year's London May Day Rally, left wing Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn urged the working class to 'Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism' (although both are symptoms of capitalism) and attacked UKIP as 'the BNP in blazers'.

The main UKIP (UK Independence Party) policy is British withdrawal from the European Union. With this main platform they got 147 councillors elected in the English County Council elections in May taking 23 percent of the popular vote. This followed on from the Eastleigh by-election in February where they achieved 27.8 per cent of the vote. In March UKIP leader Nigel Farage was invited to dinner with capitalist media mogul Rupert Murdoch who later tweeted: 'Economies going nowhere. New leaders emerging on distant horizon. Stagnant Europe racked by discontent and resentment of EU. Farage reflecting opinion'.

UKIP was established in 1993 by Tories opposed to the EU Maastricht Treaty. By the 2009 European Elections UKIP had 13 MEPs, 17 per cent of the popular vote which equated to 2.5 million voters. At the General Election in 2010 they received 920,000 votes. Support for UKIP appears to be an expression of the economic insecurity after the 2008 financial crash, xenophobia, and a distrust of the political elites of the main parties. At present, however, most of the the capitalist class do not favour withdrawal from the EU. Recently both Ford and BMW warned Cameron against EU exit insisting it would be 'devastating' for the British economy, and in a British Chambers of Commerce poll of 4,380 companies, 60 per cent felt exiting the EU would harm business.

The Tory Party leadership have been scathing about UKIP over the years; from Michael Howard in 2004 describing them as 'political cranks, gadflies and extremists' to Cameron in 2006 talking of 'fruitcakes and loonies – and closet racists mostly' to this

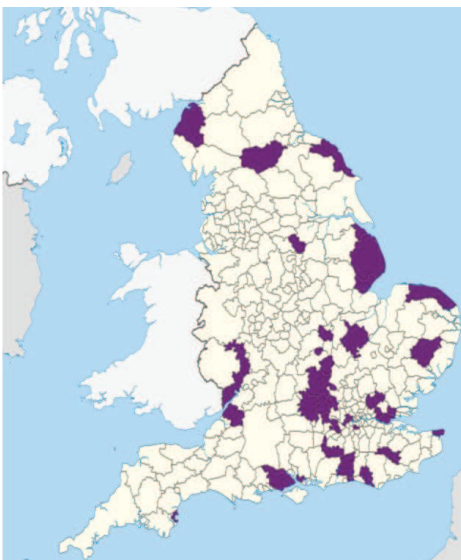
year and Kenneth Clarke speaking about 'waifs and strays' and 'a collection of clowns'. Yet in a Guardian ICM Poll this May Labour were on 34 percent, Tories 28 percent and the 'clowns' of UKIP on 18 percent followed by the Lib Dems on 11 percent.

## City backers

Farage has been described as a 'reactionary throwback', and his party, 'the Kippers', revere Churchill and Thatcher, want smoking back in pubs, a small state, low taxes, the end to mass, uncontrolled immigration with a points-based work permit system. UKIP's 'saloon bar politics' are anti-multiculturalism, antipolitical correctness, against gay marriage which represents a traditional social conservatism that hides homophobia and misogyny. Their brand of rightwing populism wants increased police numbers, the doubling of prison places, an expansion of the armed forces and to 'no longer involve the UK in military adventurism' which seems to be a rejection of liberal interventionism. UKIP are also supporters of Climate Change denial (see *Pathfinders*, June issue). An unknown leading Tory referred to grass-roots Tory activists as 'mad, swivel-eyed loons', but they could be describing UKIP.

UKIP have an avowed belief in economic liberalism or laissez faire capitalism. The party is full of ex-bankers. Farage himself is former commodity broker, and UKIP want the City excluded from EU controls. They want the repeal of the EU directive on Alternative Investment Fund Managers which seeks to regulate hedge funds and private equity companies in the City. The *Daily Telegraph* (1 June) reported that Farage had held fund-raising dinners for City supporters and had received a five figure donation from the former chief executive of a FTSE 100 company.

UKIP propose 'tens of billions' of cuts to taxation, along with a further £77 billion of cuts to the public sector in order to reduce the deficit. The economic plans outlined by UKIP have been called into question by the *Times* (29 April) which identified a '£120bn black hole' in their spending plans. On workers' rights, UKIP want to reduce the influence of Employment Tribunals, limit unfair dismissal claims, scrap most 'equality and discrimination legislation', and limit the power of Trade Unions. UKIP argue that if private sector workers have to endure pay cuts and job losses during the economic recession we are currently experiencing then it's only fair that public sector workers must do the same. One UKIP MEP feels that women of child-bearing age should not be employed because maternity rights were 'too draconian' for employers.



## Tax policy

A discussion paper on their website citing Adam Smith and David Ricardo as a guide to their taxation policy, states:

*'Every attempt to tax wages sets in motion a "shifting" process whereby the tax finishes up as a corporate impost anyway. This phenomenon was clearly set out 220 years ago in Adam Smith's illustration of an employee earning £100. If the state imposes a tax of 20% his pay must rise by 25% in order to re-instate the employee's former purchasing power (£100). He must now be paid £125 so that the 20% tax leaves him with disposable earnings of £100. In practice there may be a time-lag over which purchasing power (or the basic standard of living) is restored' (Their emphasis. [www.ukip.org/index.php/issues/policy-pages/tax](http://www.ukip.org/index.php/issues/policy-pages/tax)).*

David Ricardo did indeed argue: 'Taxes on wages will raise wages, and therefore will diminish the rate of the profit of stock... a tax on wages is wholly a tax on profits'. We too have always argued that although some taxes are paid by the working class, the burden of taxation rests on the capitalists and has to be paid out of the profit accruing to them in the form of rent, interest and profit, the basis of which is the unpaid labour of the working class.

Marx too explained why abolishing taxes on wages would make no difference for wage-workers:

*'If all taxes which bear on the working class were abolished root and branch, the necessary consequence would be the reduction of wages by the whole amount of taxes which today goes into them. Either the employers' profit would rise as a direct consequence by the same quantity, or else no more than an alteration in the form of tax-collecting would have taken place. Instead of the present system, whereby the capitalist also advances, as part of the wage, the taxes which the worker has to pay, the capitalist would no longer pay them in this roundabout way, but directly to the state... For the bourgeoisie the way in which taxes are distributed and levied, and the use to which they are put are a vital question on account of its influence on trade and industry' ([www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/10/31.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/10/31.htm)).*

UKIP believe that 'Low taxes, few regulations and small government are the recipe for a successful economy'. They want to reduce the rate of taxation on the capitalist class by replacing VAT with a Local Sales Tax, abolishing the employers' National Insurance contributions ('the tax on jobs'), abolishing Inheritance Tax and reducing Corporation Tax. UKIP are enthusiastic supporters of the Flat Tax to replace income tax and NI. They believe that there is tax avoidance by the capitalist class because rates are too high. So everybody, whatever their income, would pay the same flat rate of personal income tax.

Rather than 'the BNP in blazers' UKIP are loony rightwing advocates of free market capitalism.

The British National Party (BNP) are Britain's very own pseudo-Nazi party, the successor to Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. The BNP are 'state capitalist' and advocate a different

brand of capitalism to UKIP. They oppose globalisation, laissez faire capitalism and economic liberalism, and want an economic nationalism (autarky) whereby industries are British-owned, a renationalisation of the utilities, subordination of the City to central government, and a greater share ownership for workers.

The BNP's 'state capitalism' has its roots in 'Strasserism', the leftwing Nazism that originated in the Nazi Party's 25 points programme from 1920 which included the abolition of unearned income, the breaking of 'debt interest slavery', nationalisation of associated industries, and the division of profits in heavy industries. The Nazi Party economist Gottfried Feder advocated 'breaking the shackles of interest' and saw financial capitalism or 'Jewish finance' as opposite to productive capitalism, and at the root of societal problems not capitalism itself. The Socialist Party pointed out that this opposition to 'unearned income' was due to the fact that foreign capitalists were raking off proceeds from German industry and was a cry from the hearts of the German capitalist class. The BNP state capitalism is indeed more 'reformist eyewash'.

UKIP represent a populist rightwing capitalist reform party which is fundamentally an external faction of the Tory Party while the BNP and their quasi-Nazi state capitalism would be the wages system under new management. Both are just alternative ways to manage capitalism. A Radio 4 talking head recently said Farage was not Mussolini because he had not got the 'grandiose idea'. In that sense, UKIP are 'more Enoch Powell than Oswald Mosley' and not 'the BNP in blazers'.

**STEVE CLAYTON**





# Is Europe to blame?



***James Heartfield's new book *The European Union and the End of Politics* (Zero Books) is about the evolving relationship between the European Union and its constituent member countries. It is a mix of political science, recent European history and a call for agitation from the people of the continent.***

**T**he basic premise is that across Europe, over the last 30 years or so, there has been a decline in active, popular participation in national politics and that in most countries the mass mainstream parties of right and left are in real decline as meaningful movements. This is reflected in the great reduction in party membership and in public interest and involvement in policy debate and formulation. According to Heartfield, the fundamental reason behind this phenomenon is that most conventional political parties no longer have any major ideological divisions between each

other and generally have adopted a consensual position on the desirability of having a regulated but free market as the basis of the economy accompanied by a modest investment in the welfare state. For the parties of the Left, even talk of an aspirational nature of aiming for a major transformation to the basis of society has long since evaporated. Hence the debate in national parliaments is mostly ritualised and meaningless and the coverage of politics by the mainstream media generally focuses on personalities, scandals, government cock-ups and associated 'stories'. Into this vacuum of real politics have stepped the

institutions of the European Union. The lives of the people of Europe are increasingly determined by policies emanating from Brussels.

Heartfield points out, though, that in many cases this reduction in national decision-making has a cynical origin. Governments are relieved to use the official need to conform to EU rules and directives to explain and justify the necessity of implementing reforms (in the areas of the economy, environment, immigration etc.) that are electorally unpopular but necessary for the smooth functioning of capitalism across the continent. As an example, writing as a socialist based in Ireland, where the power of the European Union is clear particularly since the economic meltdown of 2009 and the need for the country's finances to be 'rescued' by the EU and IMF, all budget cuts and increases in taxation are said to be inevitable for Ireland to remain part of the system. However even before that it was obvious how much decision-making had been transferred to Brussels. Government ministers from most Departments make very regular visits to Brussels to consult with EU officials and their fellow ministers to return and announce a policy which is then rubber-stamped by parliament.

### Recent European history

Much of the book is taken up with an analysis of issues that have concerned the European Union since its inception: the legacy of World War Two, the influence of the Cold War on its formation and development, growing integration between the member states, the increase in the number of member countries, the relationship with the United States, the global positioning of the EU, the stresses resulting from the adoption of a common currency by some of its constituent entities, etc. Like much analysis of recent history, the reader is free to agree or disagree with the author's interpretations on any particular issue. Some of the material in the book will be of interest to any person concerned with contemporary politics though other sections (particularly Chapters 7 and 8 where the 'theory' of European integration is examined from a variety of perspectives) will only probably only excite those with a professional remit in this field.

One small criticism is that when the author discusses the antagonistic relationship between some individual countries and the European Union, it is not clear

what is precisely meant by the latter term. Is it the institutions and bureaucracy in Brussels or is it the governments of the major states, principally Germany? Heartfield's own opinion on Europe is divulged in the final, Conclusions chapter of the book. Although throughout the book, the reader is given the impression that he regards the nation-state as the superior basis for political organisation and decision-making, it seems that he is not a nationalist but is in favour of a pan-European framework for the continent. However he feels the current European Union can

**"The EU is clearly a capitalist construct where the dominant elements of the capitalist class in Europe see an advantage in organising the politics and economy of Europe on a continent-wide basis"**

have no place in such a project given its complete lack of popular democracy or genuine sovereignty. To implement a new type of Europe firstly requires the regeneration of popular politics and mass mobilisation in the national arena of its people.

### Shallow debate


The socialist objective transcends the issues discussed in the book. As socialists we seek the replacement of the current basis of society, capitalism, by a new fundamentally different basis, socialism. This will be a world-wide society not based on countries or continents or superpowers. So we are not concerned as to whether capitalism is organised on a national or trans-national basis. The EU is clearly a capitalist construct where the dominant elements of the capitalist class in Europe see an advantage in organising the politics and economy of Europe on a continent-wide basis. The reason the existence of the EU generates political heat is that such an artifice brings no advantages to some elements of the capitalist class

within each country, yet they feel they must bear a proportion of the costs, so they oppose it.

The issue of the relationship between member states and the EU is probably most controversial in the UK. However the shallowness of this debate can be quickly exposed. In 2014 there will be a referendum on Scottish Independence from the UK while in 2017 or so there may be a referendum on British 'Independence' from the EU. Does anyone really believe the day to day lives of ordinary people in Scotland or England will be significantly affected by the outcome of these referenda? Of course, as with the ebb and flow of capitalist politics, there will be temporary winners and losers amongst the working people of Britain. Those British workers who live and work or are retired in Europe, gain some minor benefits from British membership of the EU. It's much easier to travel to another member country without the need to change currency (Eurozone only), obtain visas, satisfy custom requirements, organise emergency health care, etc. As against that, other sections of the working class in Britain may benefit from an exit from the Union; those employed in sectors where they are competing with migrants from Europe to sell their labour power. However the basic position of the vast majority of the people in Britain will be unaffected by the manoeuvring of politicians on either side of these campaigns. Ultimately only the transformation of the economic basis of society and the scrapping of national and supra-national based identities can do that.

**KEVIN CRONIN**

**Socialist Party Pamphlet**  
**What's Wrong With Using Parliament?**  
**The Cases For And Against**  
**The Revolutionary Use Of Parliament**



Send cheque / money order for **£1.00**  
payable to "The Socialist Party of  
Great Britain" to 52 Clapham High St,  
London SW4 7UN.



# Stereotypes

On countless occasions I have been asked a question like: 'Do you like children?' or 'Do you like dogs?' Each time my answer has invariably been greeted by a sigh of frustration as if, somehow, I'm avoiding the question. My reply is that I like some children and not others (the same with dogs). Because I do not care to generalise my questioner cannot designate me as a 'dog lover' or someone who gets on with children.

**T**he need to generalise or 'stereotype' a person seems to be at the very heart of a popular conception of identity. Although these examples are trivial, unfortunately this need sometimes transfers itself to cultural, racial or gender descriptions. If people have personal trouble with a racial or cultural minority this is quite likely to affect their view of the whole group or culture. A woman once complained bitterly about the noise generated by the 'Nigerians' next door, forgetting that indigenous people can also be bad neighbours. My contention has always been that there exists 'the Good, the Bad and the Ugly' in all cultures and races.

The same cannot readily be said about politics – it is hard to find some redeeming feature in Fascism and its adherents since, in most part, the whole ideology is based on racial stereotypes. Perhaps this represents the ultimate ideological destination for anyone who persists in seeing others in this simplistic way? Another side effect of this kind of relationship with people is what is sometimes called 'internalisation.' A person comes to believe his or her own stereotype. If you are a male of a big build you must be 'tough' and 'macho'; if you are a 'pretty' woman you must be delicate and feminine, etc. One of the most pernicious examples of this is when someone is persistently referred to as 'thick' or unintelligent, resulting in an intellectual insecurity, where they come to believe it themselves and so cease to develop.

The working class have always been told that they do not understand the complexities of the world and so need leaders to tell them what to do – and many have come to believe this nonsense. The reader may have noticed the use of a generalisation in that last statement – the term 'working class'. Is this a meaningless stereotype used by socialists in their propaganda? Indeed, is it ever productive to make such a designation of a group of people in society?

The cult of 'individualism' would seem to 'personify' the opposite perspective

to the stereotyping I have just been condemning. Paradoxically, when I speak with most people, who nearly all



*Minstrel show racial stereotyping in sheet music from 1917*

think of themselves as individuals, they articulate the very same stereotyping, as outlined earlier, in their political thoughts. If you consider this in any depth it becomes obvious that what individualism really means in a capitalist context is usually merely consumerism. So-called individualism is simply political

**“This is a basic contradiction within capitalist culture – your individualism depends on other peoples’ suppression of their own”**

conformism and any rejection of it makes you truly individual!

So by emphasising what we all have in common rather than what divides us socialists advocate a society where

true individualism is really possible. The revolution will forever end the class struggle and humanity will no longer be divided into the parasites and the exploited (the ultimate stereotypes). The primary motivation for the propaganda of individualism is to weaken class consciousness within the majority. There is no such lack within the ruling class who always act together against any threat to their wealth and power (one reason for the existence of the Tory party). How is this propagation of conformity masquerading as individualism achieved? One of its main vehicles, unsurprisingly, is the media. Drama especially, on TV, radio and movies almost always contains stereotyped characters – the 'soap operas' being a supreme example.

As we have seen, many people characterise others in terms of stereotypes but themselves as individuals. Emotional alliances with people are mainly achieved by their identification with the ego – partners, children, parents etc. In other words people are seen primarily as extensions of the self. If their appearance or values and behaviour are very different from the self, they become the 'other' which invariably leads to suspicion and competition. These alliances and the inevitable betrayals are the fodder of soap operas. We use the term 'inevitable betrayals' because if you only identify with another in terms of your own needs then a tension will be caused by the expression of the other person's needs.

This is a basic contradiction within capitalist culture – your individualism depends on other peoples' suppression of their own. This is a reflection of consumerism since your choices condemn others and yourself to the unending quest for fulfilment through the products of alienated labour. Relationships become commodities with labels on them like 'love', 'security', 'status' and 'success'. Within such dramas this endless cycle of the quest for relationships, money and power – and the inevitable failure, is repeated again and again. This, by implication, is the

human condition with seemingly no consciousness of the use of stereotypes to emphasise capitalist values let alone the possibility of an alternative. So this is the model that many use to understand themselves. Depressing in the extreme, but fortunately some drama does exist that, at least partially, is conscious of these contradictions.

Recently I watched a film about a 'whistle blower' within the tobacco industry. He was aware that nicotine had been added to make the cigarettes more addictive. What followed was a drama about the security of his family versus his need to produce something of value (a definition of our humanity). This was an extreme example because cigarettes can and do kill people but the basic stereotypes of family man, loyal employee and citizen were examined.

There is a tradition in Hollywood movies of the 'David and Goliath' narratives where the persecuted underdog is successful in taking on the big bad corporations – something that rarely, if ever, happens in real life. But the majority in America desperately need to believe in justice and, given its absence in their everyday life, Hollywood provides it. This is, of course, the need that socialists depend on for the majority to get off their knees and make it a reality. Stereotyping others helps to prevent the consciousness of what all of us need – respect and comradeship. Without that we can never be truly human.

**WEZ**

## OBITUARY

### Jack Hughes

Jack Hughes, a long-standing member of Swansea Branch, has died at the age of 86. Jack joined the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1964 and was an active member of Swansea Branch till 1970 when he left over a disagreement about the use of parliament as an instrument for establishing the classless, stateless, moneyless society of free access advocated by the SPGB. He nevertheless retained his association with the Party and 10 years later rejoined having concluded that there was, as he put it, 'nowhere else to go'. He resumed his socialist activity and continued to be involved until recent times when his health no longer allowed it.

Many people remarked of Jack that he was a 'one-off'. What they meant was that he had a rare combination of attributes. He was as outspoken as they come and was never afraid to be the odd man out in an argument. He was a highly self-sufficient, independent, very 'private' individual loving his own company and making demands on no one. He loved walking and went everywhere on foot, considering Shanks' pony to be the best way of engaging with life and nature. He read widely and was a keen linguist teaching himself several foreign languages and becoming quite an expert in Esperanto. His keenest passion was music and in particular the accordion. Again self-taught, he became an expert accordionist and found himself in demand professionally around local venues.

It was always good to see Jack when he came to meetings. You always felt he would make a contribution that was unconventional, even unique – and you looked forward to it. He has left his mark on Swansea Branch and will be much missed by its members.

SWANSEA BRANCH



## Income tax or sales tax?

DIFFERENT CAPITALIST firms operating in Britain have reacted differently to the criticism that some of them have not been paying their fair share of taxes to the British state. Some multinational corporations have defiantly replied that in choosing to pay tax on their profits in countries where the rate is lower they have broken no laws and are just pursuing the best interests of their shareholders. Others, mainly firms operating only in Britain and so not having this option, are complaining that this amounts to unfair competition against them.

Centrica, the conglomerate which owns British Gas, commissioned a consultancy to work out how much they contribute to the British economy:

'The report, by Oxford Economics ... claims that Centrica provides £4.2bn in "total tax payments" including its own payments to HM Revenue and Customs of £1.1bn, national insurance and PAYE contributions from its staff and tax paid by consumers on their bills' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 24 February).

What is interesting here is the matter-of-fact way in which the report accepts that deductions from their staff's wages of NI and PAYE are tax payments made by Centrica to HM Revenue and Customs, just as much as the corporation tax it pays on its profits. This goes against the carefully-cultivated mystification that wage and salary earners form a part of "the taxpayers", but economic analysis confirms that it is correct to treat taxes on wages as a charge on employers.

Tax theorists distinguish between 'direct' taxes, as taxes drawn on a person's income (income from rent, interest, dividends, wages, fees, pensions), and 'indirect' taxes, levied on items on which people spend their income (such as VAT, sales tax, excise duties as on tobacco and alcohol). To the extent that the market for the item can bear it (as it will in the long run), the seller passes on the tax to the buyer by charging a higher price than otherwise. In this sense shops are acting as tax collectors for the state, with the burden of the tax falling on those who buy what they are selling.

Although an income tax on wages is classified as a direct tax it has more in common with an indirect tax. Wages are a price, the price of the wage-earner's ability to work which they are selling to their employer. The principle is no different here from any tax on something that is sold: it falls on the buyer not the seller. In other words, an income tax on wages is a sales tax on labour-power that is passed on to the buyer as higher wages than otherwise. It is the employer who is the "taxpayer" and Centrica is right to include this as part of the taxes they pay.

But aren't workers consumers too and so have to pay indirect taxes such as VAT? On the surface, yes, but what workers buy is not a final consumption; it is raw material needed to reproduce what they are selling, ie their ability to work. Any increase in the cost of producing this, such as taxes on what they buy, will increase the price employers have to pay for it. So here too, in the end these taxes paid by employees are passed on to the employer.

This is why we in Socialist Party have always insisted that taxation is not a working-class issue. Let the various sections of the capitalist class argue amongst themselves over which of them should pay and how much to finance their state. As wage and salary workers we should concentrate on organising to end our status as mere bearers of a commodity used up in production.



## Edwin Butler Bayliss

Wolverhampton Art Gallery recently showed the industrial landscapes of Edwin Butler Bayliss (1874-1950),

'poet painter of the Black Country' (*Birmingham Gazette* 1918) who was prolific in the early twentieth century. Bayliss was the son of industrial capitalist Samuel Bayliss who owned iron foundries in the Black Country which Bayliss painted along with the blast furnaces, steel works and coal mines owned by Tory MP and baronet

Sir Alfred Hickman.

*Tipping the Slag*

portrays a grey industrial landscape with smouldering slag heaps and smoking chimneys. Slag was the impurities



from smelting iron drained from the molten iron during the smelting process and is painted in vivid orange against the grey wasteland. *Blast Furnaces, Night* is a black and grey industrial landscape with blast furnaces and chimneys and flecks of orange flame against the black and grey sky.

The Black Country is defined by geology; a 30 foot coal seam plus seams of coal, iron, limestone and clay which supported the development of coal mines, coking plants, iron foundries, and steel mills in the towns of Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. In the Victorian period it was the beating heart of industrial capitalism, the industries of ironmaking, steel production and coalmining forming the bedrock for the 'workshop of the world' showcased at the Great Exhibition of 1851. In 1866 Queen Victoria visited Wolverhampton and knighted the Mayor Sir John Morris.

Charles Dickens wrote in 1841 that the industries 'poured out their plague of smoke, obscured the

light, and made foul the melancholy air' while the US consul visiting in 1862 wrote that the area was 'black by day and red by night'. By 1860 within five miles of Dudley there were 441 pits, 181 blast furnaces, 118 iron works, 79 rolling mills and 1,500 puddling furnaces. *Blast Furnaces, Bilston, Hickman's from the Canal* and *In the Gin Pit* (coal mined near to the surface) portray the 'beauty in the Black Country'.



*In the Black Country* depicts a black and grey industrial landscape of blast furnaces and chimneys against a smoky sky with a worker struggling across the landscape. *Evening in the Black Country* shows three workers trudging up a dirt track between areas of dirty green vegetation towards industrial buildings and smoking chimneys.

*The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* by Friedrich Engels details 'an industrial revolution, a revolution which at the same time changed the whole of civil society'. This industrial capitalism meant the working class endured 'filth, ruin and uninhabitableness' in 'the frightful condition of this Hell upon Earth'.

## The Low Road by Bruce Norris

*The Low Road* by American playwright Bruce Norris was recently produced by Dominic Cooke at the Royal Court Theatre in London. The play seems inspired by 18<sup>th</sup> century picaresque novels such as *Candide* by Voltaire, *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding or more probably Thackeray's work *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*.

*The Low Road* is the low road of profitability rather than the high road of principle, and the amoral anti-hero Jim Trumpet played with viciousness and without any charm by Johnny Flynn follows the former course in pre-revolutionary America. Jim expounds the economic individualism of Scottish political economist Adam Smith. Smith is himself the narrator and part character in the play and is played with relish and Brechtian flourishes by Bill Paterson.

Jim quotes Adam Smith from his seminal work of bourgeois political economy *The Wealth of Nations*: 'every individual endeavours as much as he can to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry. He neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. He intends only his own gain, and he is in this, led by an *invisible hand* to promote an end that was never part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it'. To which Norris adds 'and once his prosperity is thus achieved, the rest of the damnable world can stick it up their fucking arsehole'. Marx identified that to Adam Smith 'the means of production are to him from the outset 'capital', labour is from the outset wage-labour'.

Jim is forced to avail himself of the 'christian communism' of the New Light of Zion Colony where he engages in arguments with the congregants; 'for if one's coins sit idle there can be no growth, and without growth there can never be profit' to which Constance replies that 'all profit is theft' and 'to take from each, according to his ability' is the mantra of the colony. Constance sees Jim's financial dealings as 'usury, money-lending and Jesus drove the moneylenders from the Temple' but Jim believes 'tis speculation, finance and Jesus was an asshole'.

Constance says of capitalist society; 'there never was justice in this world. There was only ever violence and gold'. *The Low Road* is witty, perceptive, indeed it is a rip-roaring blast and a very clever take on the nature of capitalism. Constance's parting words to the capitalist ideology of Adam Smith personified by Jim Trumpet are 'Damned be your soul and damned your fucking lies'.

STEVE CLAYTON



## Clicktivism

**Digital Revolutions: Activism in the Internet Age, by Symon Hill. New Internationalist Books**



The title of the book is self-explanatory, unlike the chapter titles such as Chapter 4 'We are Next!' It focuses on a short period but in comprehensive detail. The back blurb explains that the book 'takes

a detailed look at the uprisings that have rocked the world since 2008 and looks at the part that the new media have played in their unfolding.' There is a degree of presumption about the reader's politics (and a whiff of reformism) when early on it reads, 'In 2008, an economic crash exposed the truth of a system in which the wealthy benefit and the rest of us pay for it,' and 'corporations have continued to wield unaccountable power,' and later on 'something was very wrong ... bankers had gambled with money that they did not own.'

The main crux of the book is a riposte to both digital luddites and digital utopians (who Hill labels extreme and 'two ridiculous arguments'), aiming to strike a balance between the two. To the digital utopians Peter Tatchell, writing in the Foreword, observes 'Digital Revolutions do not make social revolutions in and of themselves.' Symon Hill writes, 'There are cyber-utopians who attribute the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and anti-austerity campaigns and other global movements entirely to technology ... with little, if any, reference to the economic factors and human complexities that have triggered unrest, protest and change.' 'At the other extreme of the debate are those who think that the internet has made no difference at all ... Some even argue that the internet is undermining activism.' Click 'Like' if you agree, presumably.

Ironically, Hill fails to mention, it's the digital-luddites who are a newer phenomenon than the digital-utopians. Twentieth-century digital-utopians argued that the CIA-funded Radio Free Europe would topple the Soviet dictatorship, or that satellite TV would topple post-Cold War dictatorships.

Hill, associate director of the leftwing Christian think tank Ekklesia, writes 'The core principle with which I have approached

the book is not a belief about the internet but a conviction about power. Liberation comes from below and never from above.' Why social change does not come from above could be an interesting discussion, but convictions need no explanation: 'This book does not focus on presidential campaigns or Wikileaks, important though they are.'

To his credit, he goes on to acknowledge that power from below has in the past and can in the present and future challenge unjust and oppressive systems. He first mentions the printing press and its effect in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but throughout, there is care taken to argue that the cause has been economic, not technological. He even goes so far as to agree with another writer that there is no causal link between social protest and communications technologies.

He refers to Tim Gee's model of counterpower, in which movements can use 'Idea Counterpower', 'Economic Counterpower' and 'Physical Counterpower' to challenge the power of ruling elites and argues that the internet is relevant to all three forms. One might be inclined to agree with the digital luddite Evgeny Morozov (writer of *The Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate the World*) who argues that the internet is counterproductive for building physical counterpower. Hill does not overstate his case, quoting critics of net utopians who thought cameraphones would reduce police brutality.

Some obvious advantages are pointed out, for example the ability to rapidly organise and assemble via Twitter using locations revealed at the last minute without requiring leaders to issue instructions, an ability which favours non-hierarchical horizontalism networks with no 'ringleaders.' Although all 145 UKUncutters who occupied Fortnum and Mason were arrested and locked up overnight, Pussy Riot have been imprisoned for much longer.

In fact, you begin to suspect problems with the organisation and the politics (irrespective of the internet) when you read passages such as this, that after police had responded with water cannons and tear gas '... the Tahrir protesters met to talk about their demands. Some seasoned activists [thought that] things should be taken in stages ... Socialist [sic] campaigner and blogger Gigi Ibrahim explained 'but the people around us in Tahrir Square, the majority who didn't belong to any political group, were chanting for the

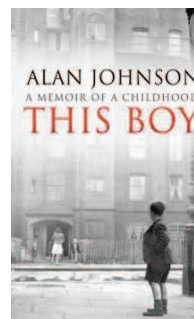
removal of the regime. So we knew at that moment that we couldn't ask for less ... Several hundred activists are thought to have been killed.' This was all back to front, taking action first, then establishing minimum (not maximum) demands afterwards.

The interests of powerful minorities have always been opposed to democracy and equality. 'Astroturfing' refers to political, advertising, or public relations campaigns that are designed to mask the sponsors of the message to give the appearance of coming from a disinterested, grassroots participant. Although Hill is critical of astroturfing's success, with questions over the Arab Spring and the closure of London Indymedia, one can't help wonder whether the internet as a tool still favours the powerful. Hill uses Marx's class analysis favourably, to 'go beyond clicktivism (online activism)', which is touching on the real cause of social change, class struggle.

DJW

## From proletarian to prat

**This Boy: A Memoir of a Childhood by Alan Johnson. Bantam Press, 2013.**



When former Home Secretary Alan Johnson told Prime Minister Tony Blair that he was married with three children before he was twenty years old, Blair replied 'You really are working class'. Alan Johnson is one of

those rare things, a member of the proletariat who climbed the greasy pole to reach high political office.

*This Boy* tells of his childhood in the 1950s and 60s, growing up in North Kensington in London W10 in 'a street whose buildings had been condemned in the 1930s'. The Johnson family were abandoned by their father, and their lives were filled with a 'grinding poverty' which comprised second hand clothes from 'the Lane' (Petticoat Lane market), debts, outside lavatories, no television or labour-saving devices, buying groceries 'on the tick', hiding from the 'tally man', and free school meals. In 1959 Macmillan said the working class had 'never had it so good'.

1950s North Kensington was captured in the photographs of



Roger Mayne who portrayed the 'squalor and vibrancy of life there' and also the arrival of immigrants from the West Indies who would be exploited by Rachman landlordism. Johnson recalls the 'Teddy Boy' riots in Notting Hill, the unsolved murder (Johnson says he knows the culprit) of West Indian Kelso Cochrane in 1959, and Oswald Mosley as Fascist candidate for North Kensington at the 1959 General Election.

Johnson's book features a portrait of his mother who died when he was thirteen. She was a Liverpudlian who admired Suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst, Liberal leader Jo Grimond, disliked Churchill, and worked as a 'charlady in the posh houses of South Kensington'. His mother and elder sister kept the family going in a period of the Welfare State when benefit entitlements were administered through the head of a family (ie. the man).

Johnson describes his passion for Queens Park Rangers who had a golden era in the 1960s which culminated in winning the football League Cup in 1967. Music was a passion from the skiffle of Lonnie Donegan to the Beatles and Stones and discovering Chicago blues. Johnson details the influential books and authors in his life which included *Shane* by Jack Schaefer, Mark Twain, HG Wells, Arnold Bennett and George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*.

Johnson passed his 11-plus and went to grammar school in Chelsea but left school at 15 eventually becoming a postman. He joined the Labour Party in 1971 although he

considered himself a 'Marxist in the CPGB style'. He also joined his trade union becoming the CWU General Secretary in 1992. He was the only senior trade unionist to support the New Labour abolition of Clause IV, and a safe parliamentary seat was found for him in 1997. He held various cabinet posts under Blair and then Brown. As Education Minister he introduced differential university tuition fees, and as Home Secretary he sacked Professor David Nutt, Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs who had accused the government of 'distorting' and 'devaluing' research evidence in the debates about Ecstasy and cannabis. **SPC**

## Failure and Success

***Why Nations Fail: the Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty, by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. Profile, £10.99***

Why do some countries have a higher standard of living for most of their population than others have? The authors' answer relies on a distinction between inclusive and extractive institutions at both the political and economic level. For further discussion of the book and replies to reviews, see [whynationsfail.com](http://whynationsfail.com).

Politically, inclusive institutions are both centralised and pluralistic. This means, firstly, that they involve sufficient power of coercion in state hands to defend law and order and enforce property rights; this is in contrast to chaotic countries

such as Somalia, which lack any true government power (they are sometimes called anocracies). Secondly, power is spread around to some extent rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few, whether a monarch and aristocracy or a dictator and his cronies. Extractive political institutions are either non-pluralistic or non-centralised. Economically, inclusive institutions foster productive activity and innovation rather than (as extractive institutions do) siphoning off wealth for the benefit of a small clique and stifling new ideas and developments as a challenge to the status quo.

There is claimed to be a 'synergy' between economics and politics in that inclusive and extractive types tend to go together. But 'it is politics and political institutions that determine what economic institutions a country has.' Economic growth is more likely under inclusive institutions; it is possible under extractive ones but is likely to be short-lived, as in the former 'Soviet' Union and today's China (where the authors predict that either the country will become more pluralistic or the growth will peter out). The richer countries nowadays are those that began industrialisation in the nineteenth century, while the poorer ones did not.

The book contains a number of instructive case studies, which we cannot discuss properly here. Let's just look at a couple. In 1945 the two parts of Korea were pretty similar, but then extractive institutions in the North led to stagnation and starvation, while South Korea ►



## Quizzing the Whizzkids

COULD YOU talk in sentences when you were only eight months old? Or perhaps you had written four novels by the age of ten? If not, then you wouldn't have fitted in with the brainy

bairns appearing on Channel 4's *Child Genius*, two of whom boast these achievements.

The show follows some of the seven to eleven year-olds who have qualified for Mensa's 'child genius of the year' competition. Of course, these clever-clog kids didn't get this far by themselves. Eight year-old Josh's mother makes him play chess for fifty hours a week so he can be a grand master before he reaches thirteen. And little Longyin's father has put together a strict timetable of sport and studies in half-hour instalments, including 'controlled failure situations' to motivate his son to succeed. The less pushy parents seem slightly bewildered and

drained by their offsprings' abilities and never-ending energy.

At the competition, maths and logic questions are fired at each whizzkid while they stand at a podium, watched tensely by the cameras, their parents and the other contestants. The pressure gets to some of the miniature masterminds, raising questions about what effects the label 'IQ in the top 0.1% of the population' has on people so young. For example, many of the children face difficulties in relating to others because of their intellect.

Most of the child geniuses (genii?) come from families wealthy enough to afford extras like the weekly private tuition with a chess master which Josh enjoys. And good luck to them; of course parents should encourage their spawns' strengths. But this gets you wondering why few of the competing prodigies have emerged from more humble backgrounds. As a rule, the less money you have, the fewer opportunities you get. So, the contest isn't really just testing innate abilities. It's also a competition between families and how much they can afford to invest in their kids. Regardless of their IQs, will the children think about their good fortune in this way?

**Mike Foster**



## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

### Manchester

Saturday 13 July 2.00pm

CLASS

Unicorn, Church Street, M4 1PW

### London

Chiswick

Tuesday 16 July 8.00pm

SYRIA

Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall,  
Heathfield Terrace, W4 4JN

### Clapham

Sunday 21 July 3.00pm

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION IN RETREAT  
1920-24

Guest Speaker: author Simon Pirani  
Socialist Party premises, 52 Clapham  
High St, London, London, SW4 7UN.

### Glasgow

Wednesday 17 July 8.30pm

WHAT SOCIALISTS KNOW – AND HOW  
THEY KNOW IT

Speaker: John Cumming

Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill  
Road, Glasgow G20 6HT

### East Anglia

Saturday 27 July 2.00-5.00pm

A ROBOT STOLE MY JOB:  
EMPLOYMENT, AUTOMATION AND  
PROFIT.

Speaker: Darren Poynton

Nelson Hotel (opposite the train station),  
120 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich  
NR1 1DX

## Book reviews

adopted inclusive institutions and became an economic powerhouse, home to global corporations such as Samsung. Acemoglu and Robinson accept that the South was not a democracy and had 'authoritarian presidents', but they massively understate the extent of the dictatorship there (such as torturing strikers and firing on demonstrators) and also the amount of US support and investment. So there is little evidence from South Korea for the determining force of politics.

The Industrial Revolution is always a crucial issue in such broad-scope histories. In 1589 Elizabeth I refused a patent for a kind of knitting machine on the grounds that the introduction of such technology would lead to wide-scale impoverishment; in fact, she

was probably afraid of any resulting instability and its threat to her status. But the Glorious Revolution of 1688 ended this concentration of monarchical power and gave much more say to the rising merchant and capitalist classes. From the middle of the eighteenth century many technological innovations were introduced in Britain as the Industrial Revolution took off. As the authors see it, the events of 1688 created inclusive political institutions, and these underpinned the inclusive economic institutions of property rights and efficient financial markets. But they are well aware that even the forms of democracy were very limited at the time, and that the capitalist class were able to use their new power to have textile imports from India banned. As this last example shows, inclusive institutions can be used to defend the interests of a small class of factory owners and to constrain production elsewhere.

In fact the whole idea of the institution types is not as straightforward as the authors seem to think. It is argued that inclusive economic institutions 'allow and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make best use of their talents and skills and that enable individuals to make the choices they wish'. It is hard to see how this fits any version of capitalism, since most people are forced to take dead-end or menial jobs (if they can find them) that make scant use of their skills, and so they have little choice in how they live their lives. Inclusive institutions benefit the capitalist class in general, not those who perform the labour that makes the owners wealthy.

**PB**

#### Picture Credits

**Cover:** Injured protester - © Mstislav Chernov 2013 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Lord Laird - © Steve Nimmons 2011 Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license. Nigel Farage - © Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece, 2013 the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license. Doncaster Rovers Belles - © Zider red 2013 Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.  
**p4:** telephone, 2008, Gnararra, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia License  
**p5:** galaxy, NASA; Iain Banks, 2009, TimDuncan, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.  
**p6:** Portico, 2011, Grosasm, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, 2.5 Generic, 2.0 Generic and 1.0 Generic license; Everest, Pavel Novak, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license.  
**p9:** Lord Mackenzie - lordmackenzie.com.  
**p10:** Istanbul, June 2013, © Nevit Dilmen, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.  
**p12:** Rockall - © Andy Strangeway 2008 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic. UK EEZ - © Andmoreagain0815, 2007 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.  
**p13-14:** Ukup bus, 2004, Ian Roberts, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license; UKIP Map, April 2013, 07bargem, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license; hoarding, 2009, Lewis Clarke, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.  
**p16:** European Union map - © DrRandomFactor 2012 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.  
**p19:** Low Road, royalcourtheatre.com  
**p20:** Digital Revolutions... - newint.org.  
**p21:** Child genius - educationworld.in  
**p24:** Pigeon, pigeonracingpigeon.com; gallows, Eitan f, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



# 50 Years Ago

## The Pope is dead

POPE JOHN died when, just before the Profumo scandal burst, news was in short supply. Especially the juicy 'human interest' sort of news on which the popular press thrives. On thin rations, the papers made the most of the drawn out death agonies. Some of the headlines were almost ghoulish.

This gave us a peep at one of the nastiest sides of capitalism—the side which works for a profit out of human suffering, even when it is the suffering of one of the great upholders of property society.

Not only reporters rushed to say nice things about John XXIII. Bertrand Russell, a professed non-believer, echoed the popular estimation of the dead Pontiff as a man of peace:

'The Pope used his office and his energy to bring peace and to oppose policies which lead to war and mass murder. His encyclical is a magnificent statement of the deepest wishes and hopes of all men of decency ... I mourn his death.'

There is, indeed, some rather tenuous evidence that the dead Pope was prepared to act as some sort of a go-between in a new world carve-up by the United States and Russia. This is the soil of diplomatic dabbling which often qualifies all sorts of people for the description of 'peace loving.'

But this holds good only in peacetime. We know that, just like his predecessors, the Pope would have done nothing to oppose a future war and that in such a war there could well be Catholics in both sides, killing each other.

Thus does capitalism make warriors of them all.

In any case, modern war has nothing to do with a supposed lack of men of peace among the world's leaders. Capitalism itself causes war and the leaders always go along on the tide of destruction.

And let all peace lovers remember that capitalism has always done well out of the servile ignorance of the religious, and especially of the Church of which John XXIII was so briefly the Vicar Supreme.

(From 'The News in Review', *Socialist Standard*, July 1963)



# ACTION REPLAY

## Ups and Downs

YOU MIGHT think that promotion and relegation in a league system would be essentially based on sporting criteria. But, professional sport being primarily a business, other considerations, especially financial ones, often play a part.

Doncaster Rovers Belles are one of the longest-established clubs in women's football, with a fairly illustrious history. In 2011, the FA set up the Women's Super League (WSL), with games played in summer. Donny did not fare too well, finishing second from bottom in the first two seasons. But, after one match of the current season, the FA have announced that the Belles will be relegated to the second division of the Super League in 2014. Their place will be taken by Manchester City Ladies, who only finished fourth in the confusingly-named Premier League (which has been the league below the Super League but will be re-named WSL 2). Sunderland have won the Premier League for three consecutive years, yet will not get promoted to WSL 1.

It's not hard to discover the reasons for

these shenanigans. The new WSL team are part of Manchester City, a would-be global brand with a lot of oil money behind them. Poor old Donny can hardly compete at that level. The manager of another WSL team described the FA's actions as 'morally scandalous', but that will hardly get them to change their minds.

When the Indian company Venky's bought Blackburn Rovers in 2010, it seems that the owners did not realise there was such a thing as relegation in English football. Presumably they thought the (men's) Premier League ran on something like the US franchise system, whereby new teams can only enter if existing members vote them in. Many leagues in various sports operate a system of checking whether a team eligible for promotion has an appropriate stadium, for instance.

In rugby league, acceptance into Super League is via a licensing system, with clubs granted a three-year licence which makes them exempt from relegation during that period. There are current proposals to change this with effect from 2015, with promotion and relegation being reintroduced. As one rugby pundit commented (*BBC Online*, 13 May), 'Sport has to have a meaning, otherwise what's the point? A system based on individual or team achievement is the essence of the British sporting DNA.'

WORTH  
£9.95

## SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

# FREE

### SOCIALISM OR YOUR MONEY BACK

Articles from the *Socialist Standard* 1904 - 2004. A running commentary of 100 years of capitalist history by a socialist journal.

■ Two World Wars
■ The Russian Revolution
■ The Rise of Hitler
■ The Spanish Civil War
■ Hiroshima
■ The Silicon Chip
■ Pop Music

...and much more

### WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO the **socialist standard**

*This collection will revive a jaundiced spirit... Every home should have one.*

**THE INDEPENDENT**



For more details about The Socialist Party, or to request a free copy of *Socialism Or Your Money Back* and a subscription to the *Socialist Standard*, please complete and return this form to **52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.**

☐ Please send me an info pack

☐ Please send me a free copy of *Socialism Or Your Money Back* and a subscription to the *Socialist Standard*. I enclose a cheque payable to 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain' (see page 2 for subscription rates).

Name.....

Address.....

.....

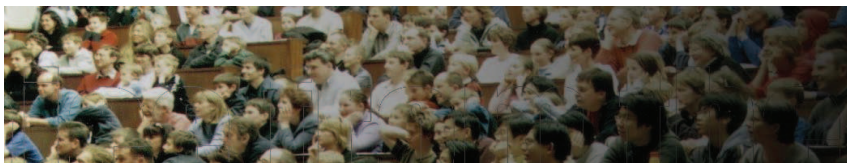
.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....





# Voice from the Back

## Empty Rhetoric

Politicians always emphasise the importance of new legislation and of course their own importance. 'The Child Poverty Act of 2010 holds the government accountable for reducing child poverty. On Wednesday, new figures from the Institute for Fiscal Studies show that not only are they failing to do so, the numbers of children living in poverty will actually rise, from 2.4 million to 3.4 million by 2020 – the date that was set for the elimination of child poverty in the UK' (*Guardian*, 8 May). So after all that pompous talk and so-called erudition what is the result? More kids are living in poverty than before the brilliant legislation.

## It's A Mad, Mad World

Many opponents of the the World Socialist Movement think we are a little mad. A world based on production for use? No profits? No Money? Crazy! But what of present day society? 'A racing pigeon named Bolt officially became the most expensive pigeon in the world earlier this week when a Chinese businessman bought him at auction for \$400,000' (*Business Insider*, 22 May). We live in a society wherein millions of people try to exist on less than \$2 a day and yet a member of the capitalist class can spend \$400,000 on a pigeon. Who are the mad people?



Fancy a flutter?

## The Killer Society

There are many many reasons to abolish capitalism. War, poverty, racialism and nationalism, to mention but a few, but here's another powerful reason. 'Malnutrition is responsible for 45 per cent of the global deaths of children under the age of five, research published in the *Lancet* medical journal suggests. Poor nutrition leads to the death of about 3.1 million under-fives, annually,

it says' (*BBC News*, 6 June). Capitalism is a baby killer – we must get rid of it.

## A Greek Tragedy

David Smith in an otherwise critical review of the book *The Body Economic: Why Austerity Kills* praises the authors for this piece of information. 'Take Greece, the worst-hit of Europe's crisis economies, which is now in its sixth year of recession. With unemployment at 27 per cent, the suicide rate has soared. Deep cuts in health spending have led to not only to a severe rationing of basic treatments and medicines, but also to an increase in suicides, malaria and HIV' (*Sunday Times*, 26 May). An increase in suicides, malaria and HIV – isn't capitalism wonderful?



## Cause for Celebration?

We can understand workers celebrating joyous occasions like a birthday or a wedding but this commemoration astounds us. 'Britain is to mark the centenary of the First World War with cultural events and an act of reconciliation with Germany on the battlefield. Maria Miller, the culture secretary, will announce the appointment of one of the leaders of the £20m programme tomorrow' (*Sunday Times*, 9 June). They are spending £20 million to commemorate a war that annihilated 16 million lives. Truly capitalism is a sick society.

## Progressing Backwards

The illusion nurtured by supporters of capitalism that workers are constantly improving their financial position is shattered by another study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Wages have fallen more in real terms in the current economic downturn than ever before, according to their recent report. 'On top of rising cost of living, one third of workers who stayed in the same job saw a wage cut or freeze between 2010 and 2011, said the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). In 2009, the average public sector worker earned about £16.60 per hour, which dropped to about £15.80 in 2011, the IFS said. Meanwhile, hourly pay for private sector workers in 2009 was just over £15.10 and dropped to £13.60 in 2011' (*BBC News*, 12 June). Even the capitalist class institutions like the IFS know that the worker's position is getting worse off.

## A Prince And A Pauper

Prince Charles as a future king of England is forced to attend all sorts of press shows and say all sorts of nonsense to all sorts of cringing, sycophantic journalists but even he must have felt a little sick at this utterance. 'The Prince, known in Scotland as the Duke of Rothesay, met recovering servicemen and women at the Edinburgh House personnel recovery centre. .... Among those he met was Paul Lambert, 32, who lost both legs in Afghanistan in 2009. The Prince praised him as a "great example"' (*Times*, 14 June). You own absolutely nothing. You go into a conflict that has nothing to do with you. You have both your legs blown off. Your life is ruined. A 'great example' of working class stupidity is what we would call it.

## FREE LUNCH

